

Geotourism project maps unique local sites

Tahoe Emigrant Corridor nomination period now open

By Gloria Young Journal Staff Writer



Journal file photo

Artists Rick and Janet Nicholson, owners of Nicholson Blown Glass in Auburn, pose with some of their work. The Nicholsons' studio is one of the sites on the National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide.

Auburn has its well-known sights like the Foresthill Bridge and the Historic Courthouse. Then there are the scenic byways and off-the-beaten-path family farms, eateries and shops.

And now residents have an opportunity to literally put all those places on the map.

The National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide has opened the nomination period for the Tahoe Emigrant Corridor, which includes Placer, Nevada, El Dorado, Washoe, Carson and Douglas counties.

The Tahoe Emigrant Corridor is the second of four regions to be highlighted within the Sierra Nevada through a project funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Sierra Business Council and National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Development.

The MapGuide is an interactive website featuring map points highlighting people, places, businesses and events unique to the Sierra Nevada.

"As somebody who has been living in the Sierra Nevada for 50 years, I learn something new every time I log onto the site," said Pete Dufour, public information officer with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. "Little places you pass — little roadside stops you pass and wonder about the history behind them, locally established longtime family farms, ranches or something that can give you the history — you'll find them by looking at these map points."

It's a great tool not only for residents learning more about local history but also for visitors wanting to find things to do in the area, he said.

The entry period began in June and runs through August. Among the entries already registered for the area are Nicholson Blown Glass, High Hand Nursery and SARSAS' Calling Back the Salmon celebration to be held Oct. 23 in Lincoln.

The Auburn area has many sites Dufour would like to see added to the map, from the Mountain Quarries Railroad Bridge and hiking trails, to Dr. Kenneth Fox's statues and local businesses such as Machado Orchards and Cherry Records.

"It's a unique store and (the owner) has all kinds of music there, including an album from the 1972 Del Oro band," Dufour said about Cherry Records. "He has a tremendous stock of used records and cassettes. If he doesn't have it, he can get it for you. To me, that's a local experience someone coming through Auburn might enjoy."

Nominations can also include people, art galleries, entertainment venues or even volunteer opportunities, according to Martini Morris, an AmeriCorps volunteer working for the Sierra Business Council.

"Anything or anyone that is authentic and distinctive to the Sierra," she said.

Nominations must be posted at the website SierraNevadaGeotourism.org. They must include at least one photo, two to five paragraphs of good text, contact information and an address, site location or coordinates. Photos must be at least 350 pixels by 220 pixels, Morris said.

A 19-member geo council reviews the nominations.

"We're getting a lot of cool stuff," Morris said.

For instance, there's a hang-gliding opportunity in Minden, Nev. Then there's the Donner Summit 20-mile museum, consisting of signs along a 20-mile stretch of road providing information on the historical and cultural significance of the area, she said.

The first nomination phase, for the Yosemite gateway, was launched in April and received approximately 1,000 entries. It has had more than 38,000 cyber visits from 79 countries in just three months, according to a Sierra Nevada Conservancy press release.

"There is a lot more to see and experience in the Sierra Nevada beyond the more well known and obvious destinations," conservancy Executive Officer Jim Branham said. "Through the MapGuide nomination process, local folks are providing special inside knowledge of the history and current culture of the Sierra to enhance the visitor's overall experience. It's good for the visitor and it's a shot in the arm to the local Sierra economy."

The conservancy is sponsoring a workshop July 19 on how to nominate entries for the project.

How to nominate Geotourism workshop

When: 3 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, July 19 (reception to follow)

Where: Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Leslie Conference Room, 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn

For more information and reservations: e-mail Lynn Campbell at lcampbell@sierranevada.ca.gov or call (530) 823-4695.

To view the National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide, see SierraNevadaGeotourism.Org.